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Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Friday, 30 June 1995, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. KAMAL (Pakistan)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.40. a.m.

COORDINATION OF THE POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND OTHER BODIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING THEMES:

(a) COORDINATED FOLLOW-UP BY THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE MAJOR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES ORGANIZED BY THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND RELATED FIELDS

(agenda item 3 (a)) (continued) (E/1995/86)

The PRESIDENT welcomed the senior Secretariat officials who had been responsible for the United Nations conferences and had agreed to act as panellists and take part in an exchange of views on agenda item 3 (a) with the members of the Council.

Mrs. SADIK (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) said that the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development had been facilitated by the effective and practical set of recommendations issued by the Conference itself. Following the Conference, the Administrator of UNDP, as the coordinator for the Secretary-General, had asked her to convene an inter-agency task force to implement the Conference goals.

The task force had selected five areas of focus to delineate a common framework for follow-up and help countries to develop their own follow-up framework, based on the work of their sectoral ministries and departments. The five areas were: 1. basic education, including special attention to gender disparities - for which UNESCO had been selected as the lead agency; 2. a policy statement on behalf of all the organizations participating in the task force; 3. women's empowerment issues, for which the lead agency was UNIFEM; 4. common data systems at the national level in the field of health and 5. reproductive health.

The task force had also sought ways to enhance a coordinated response by United Nations entities at the country level, primarily by drawing up a set of guidelines for use by the resident coordinators and representatives in the field. The working groups, which included the relevant United Nations agencies and departments, were each drawing up a set of practical guidelines and reference materials for use by the resident coordinators, against which programmes in any of the areas covered by the Conference would be reviewed at the country level.

All the organizations represented in the task force worked closely with their counterparts in the Governments, recognizing that the main responsibility for the implementation of any conference lay with Governments and that follow-up must strengthen national capacities. The following meeting of the inter-agency task force would be held at the end of July, after which it would be possible, she hoped, to send the guidelines to the field.

The Conference had also made recommendations concerning mobilization of resources, the second important follow-up area. To that end, the Secretary-General had asked her to convene a meeting of all the bilateral and multilateral financial institutions, funds and programmes. That meeting had suggested that Governments should develop their own implementations plans, assessing their needs, the maximum amount of resources available and the gap to be filled by the international community. There had been a positive response from the developing countries, a number of which were reviewing their current programmes and integrating the follow-up of the Conference into mechanisms already set up for other conferences.

Other follow-up mechanisms involved intergovernmental guidance, i.e. the relationship between the Commission set up as a result of the Conference and the other functional commissions and the role of the Council. She hoped that they would be discussed, particularly from the Secretariat point of view, which had not hitherto been mentioned at all.

Mr. AYALA LASSO (High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that the programmes adopted by the major world conferences were substantively interrelated and their implementation was interdependent. As he had stated during the World Summit for Social Development, there was a direct relationship between the promotion of human rights and the topics of poverty, employment and social integration; progress in the area of human rights would contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Summit, and vice versa.

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/141, the High Commissioner for Human Rights had the responsibility of coordinating human rights promotion and protection activities throughout the United Nations system. Human rights were considered to be the expression of a new international awareness that permeated all United Nations activities. Priority consideration of human rights issues thus contributed to the integration of United Nations system-wide activities. To that end, cooperation among all the organizations of the system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, was important.

Substantive and logistic support, joint action, exchange of information and other forms of cooperation should guide the activities of the United Nations agencies and programmes in the field of human rights. The need for coordinating activities in the field had been widely recognized, most recently by the participants in the Group of Seven meeting at Halifax.

The World Conference on Human Rights had adopted an integrated and symmetric approach to the protection of human rights, the strengthening of democracy and sustainable development. It had reaffirmed the universality of human rights, stated that human rights should guide all United Nations activities and underlined the indivisibility and interdependence of all human rights.

At its April 1994 session, the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) had placed human rights on its agenda for the very first time and had reached agreement on periodic discussions to enhance a coordinated approach to the follow-up to the World Conference. A task force might perhaps be established for that purpose.

He had several concrete suggestions to make regarding the coordination of follow-up. First, access to information was the initial step towards coordination in all areas. He thus endorsed the plans mentioned in the Secretary-General's report (E/1995/86) to establish an information system covering the follow-up to the major international conferences. The support of the Council in that regard would be most welcome. Secondly, the report stressed the important role of ACC in coordinating the activities aimed at implementation of the recommendations of the major international conferences. A regular review by ACC of the progress achieved would have an important impact on such follow-up. Thirdly, prevention had become central to international human rights preoccupations, and it would be desirable for the Council to endorse the Secretary-General's efforts in that direction, including the development of an inter-agency early-warning system. Fourthly, United Nations response to emergency situations should always address the major social problems from which crises arose. Fifthly, United Nations assistance to countries that were in transition from authoritarian rule to democratic Government might be provided in the framework of the coordinated follow-up to the major world conferences. Particular attention should be paid to the protection of cultural, economic and social rights that might be

challenged by the restructuring of national economies. Sixthly, it was vital to ensure proper coordination of the activities carried out in the framework of advisory services and technical assistance.

Several international conferences had attached particular importance to problems related to cultural, economic and social rights and the right to development. Coordination in those areas might include: the assessment of the impact of agencies' policies, programmes and strategies on respect for those rights; pilot projects to implement the right to development and cultural, economic and social rights; promotion of those rights at the national level; cooperation with international/regional finance and development organizations and with the regional economic commissions; elaboration of criteria to identify areas where assistance in those fields might be needed; establishment of a roster of experts and the preparation of a manual on promoting the right to development; training programmes at the national and local levels addressed to policy makers, parliamentarians and others whose decisions affected human rights designed to raise awareness of the interdependent nature of human rights and social and economic development activities and, finally, concrete projects supporting popular participation.

The Programme of Action adopted by the World Summit for Social Development referred, in paragraph 95, subparagraph (i), to the monitoring by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of those aspects of the Declaration and Programme of Action that related to compliance, by the States parties, with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. It would be useful if a more specific concept in that regard could be elaborated by the Council in consultation with the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Attention should also be paid to the coordination of education activities. The Plan of Action for the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education had been based on the assumption that that would be done, and he was ready to assist United Nations agencies and programmes in that respect.

Mr. DESAI (Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) said that the centrepiece of the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) was the Commission on Sustainable Development, a new functional commission of the Council established for the purpose. Because of the nature of sustainable development, the Commission had had to address the issue of coordinated

follow-up very early on. To avoid duplication in its work, it was interacting closely with other intergovernmental bodies such as the Commission on Science and Technology, the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Commission on Population and Development.

It was assisted in that task by the Inter-agency Committee on Sustainable Development, which had decentralized coordination through the system of task managers. An attempt was being made to link the work processes of the Commission on Sustainable Development as far as possible with those already existing for other purposes within the system, such as those of UNFPA for issues relating to demography, FAO for land, forestry and fishery issues, etc.

The Commission on Sustainable Development had emerged as a body that was being genuinely serviced by the entire United Nations system. One reason therefor was its five-year programme of work, which had enabled other Secretariat entities to plan their own work in the light of their contributions to it. Such a perspective was essential to a coordinated follow-up to conference processes.

Great as was the importance of coordination at the global and inter-agency levels, it was just as important at the country level. So much overlap occurred in the outcome of conferences that some measures of coordination had to be found - a task complicated by the fact that, in such areas as sustainable development and social development, there was no single national interlocutor for the United Nations system to address but rather a multiplicity of government departments, ministries and other institutions. There were, moreover, great differences from country to country in point both of institutional arrangements and of priorities in national programmes and plans.

It was, therefore, important that each country should define what it believed to be the best way of coordinating its relationships with the United Nations system, particularly in respect of such broad-based programmes of action as those that had emerged from the Rio de Janeiro and Copenhagen conferences. In order to assist Governments in that process, UNDP had been requested to explore ways of achieving more coherent and integrated arrangements by which the burden at the national level could be reduced - an objective which the Secretariat recognized as being of the greatest importance and was sparing no effort to achieve.

It was gratifying to note that one consequence of the follow-up to UNCED had been the establishment of a number of national coordinating mechanisms in the form of national councils of sustained development, national commissions, and other types of national coordination arrangements.

The follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development was still at the exploratory stage, but the initial steps should be taken at the intergovernmental level. Such social issues as poverty alleviation and employment promotion had long been on the agenda of a number of intergovernmental bodies in the United Nations system, and it was essential to organize the follow-up to the Summit in such a way as to maximize the links with existing processes. In the social development field also, the system would find no single interlocutor at the national level, and there was the same need to arrive at arrangements that would make interaction as efficient as possible.

Mr. FORTIN (Officer-in-Charge, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) said that, although UNCTAD was not a global cross-sectoral inter-agency body, it was the major United Nations conference dealing with economic development and international development cooperation. It would, therefore, be appropriate for him to give some account of the way in which it had undertaken the follow-up to UNCTAD VIII, particularly in fields where coordination was specifically required.

The mandate of UNCTAD VIII required the Trade and Development Board to monitor events in the world economy and in international economic cooperation, the essential instrument to that end being the Trade and Development report. UNCTAD maintained a close relationship with the Bretton Woods institutions, particularly the World Bank, where issues of structural adjustment and development strategies were also being discussed. The relationship was a productive one but involved a certain amount of tension since the perspectives of the two organizations, particularly on structural adjustment and development strategies, did not always coincide.

In the field of international trade and commodities, the Trade and Development Board not only followed events closely but also had ad hoc working groups dealing with the trading opportunities for developing countries and economies in transition, that stemmed from changes in the international trading system, and particularly from the conclusion of the Uruguay Round.

The main issue of coordination naturally arose with GATT/WTO, but the Board also worked closely with the regional commissions, and with the International Trade Centre, which had a very good trade information database. It had endeavoured to follow up and implement the results of conferences in that field through an initiative that it called "trade efficiency" - an effort to utilize electronic means of communication and information to expedite international trade and improve access to international markets by small and medium-sized potential exporters and importers in the developing world.

UNCTAD had previously had an ad hoc working group on investment and technology transfer, but, since the recent incorporation into UNCTAD of the Centre for Science and Technology Development, it was providing the servicing secretariat for the Commission for Science and Technology for Development, which had become the main executing or implementing intergovernmental agency, working closely with the Commission on Sustainable Development.

Other concerns that called for coordination included poverty alleviation - which had been declared a major element in the mandate of UNCTAD VIII - and a standing committee had been set up specifically to deal with the topic. One of the questions it had investigated was the impact of the Uruguay Round: its conclusion had been that the Round would not make any significant contribution to poverty alleviation, and, indeed, would marginally increase poverty in the case of Africa.

On employment promotion, UNCTAD also worked closely with ILO and the World Bank. Some differences had inevitably emerged, for example on such questions as labour market flexibility, and the interrelationships between trade, environment and development. In the inter-agency committees, UNCTAD had recently provided material for the Secretary-General's report to the Commission on Sustainable Development - a good example of coordination and synergy.

The Trade and Development Board had also worked very well not only with the Commission but with the secretariats of UNEP and UNDP. In addition, the World Trade Organization had a committee on trade and environment which provided, perhaps, the most interesting model of how coordination could be achieved in a complex area.

The PRESIDENT commented that the members of the Council would no doubt have noted with interest the last speaker's remark about the impact of the Uruguay Round on Africa.

Mr. SPETH (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)), presenting a brief account of the activities he had undertaken on behalf of the Secretary-General over the past year as special coordinator in the economic and social fields, said that, in discharging the multiple responsibilities entrusted to him, he had followed certain principles: to bear constantly in mind that his primary duty was to assist the Secretary-General; to recognize the need for rigorous selectivity in the initiatives undertaken, and particularly to ensure that they included those specifically requested by the Secretary-General; to take great care not to interfere with or attempt to supersede existing responsibilities and assignments; and to make a careful distinction between his activities as special coordinator and those incumbent upon him as Administrator of UNDP.

Several arrangements had been made to improve information sharing and decision-making within the United Nations system. At the request of the Secretary-General, he had chaired meetings of the senior officials of organizations concerned with economic and social affairs, including those from some of the smaller funds and programmes and the regional economic commissions. Three such meetings had already been held and had proved extremely productive. They provided, in fact, the only opportunity for senior officials to come together to discuss common problems and build a sense of unity and common purpose. In addition, working lunches were held once a fortnight and attended by under-secretaries-general working in or passing through New York, and they, too, had proved highly productive.

The Secretary-General had also requested him to represent the development side of United Nations activities in the operational task force, which met weekly to review United Nations activities in complex emergencies and other emergency situations. That, too, had proved a fruitful arrangement. Finally, a computer-based information sharing system had been established to facilitate communications among senior officials.

He had also undertaken a number of specific assignments on behalf of the Secretary-General. Work on the "agenda for development" was proceeding in close association with the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD) and the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group. Support for the resident coordinator system had included some important reforms, including opening the system to participants from the leadership of other funds and

agencies, providing backup support for the resident coordinators, improving the quality of personnel, clarifying the role of the resident coordinators, and providing some financial resources for the coordinators, a step recently approved by the Executive Board of UNDP.

Work had also been undertaken for the Secretary-General on a special initiative for Africa, which had benefited greatly from the participation of the specialized agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions. Support was being also given to the Secretary-General in forging an integrated follow-up to the conferences, building on existing machinery and engaging to the fullest extent the energies of all entities within the United Nations system. A major objective had been to focus on the operationalization of United Nations mandates so as to provide support for country programmes.

Steps were also being taken to strengthen the role of the regional economic commissions and to clarify their responsibilities. One outcome had been a commitment to enable the regional economic commissions to be coordinating bodies at the regional level of United Nations activities with the commissions taking the chair at meetings of United Nations-sponsored programmes and agencies - an arrangement which had led to them becoming known unofficially as "regional ACCs".

The most recent meeting of senior officials had identified some areas for future work, including strengthening the ties with the Bretton Woods institutions, tightening the links between relief and development, improving public information and the projection of United Nations activities, and strengthening United Nations analytical capacities, which, by amalgamating existing capacities in various parts of the system, including UNCTAD, could become second to none. Steps were also contemplated to strengthen links with civil society, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the business community, municipal officials, youth groups, and parliamentarians.

Mr. MUHAMMAD AMISH (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said he wondered whether, in all the discussions relating to improved coordinated follow-up, there might be a risk of paying less attention to some of the groupings, already comparatively neglected, which formed part of the United Nations family than to intergovernmental bodies of more powerful countries such as the Group of Seven. In addition, he would like the Administrator of UNDP to say how he envisaged his role as coordinator of the entire range of activities in question.

It was regrettable that UNCTAD was to be given no part in the activities in question, despite its vast experience and the great service it had rendered to the developing countries; his delegation was not, however, expecting any response in that regard, since the reasons therefor were sufficiently well-known.

While his delegation was not opposed in principle to an effort aimed at providing guidelines for the various bodies of the United Nations system, it was concerned about the possibility of imposing undue burdens on developing countries in ways which could adversely affect their well-being.

Mr. DESAI (Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) said he could assure the Council that the Secretariat was wholeheartedly committed to the principle of the sovereign equality of all States and that, in the coordination rounds and procedures, as in everything else, all countries would receive the utmost attention without distinction.

Mr. SPETH (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme) said that, of course, he himself could not possibly coordinate the activities of all the United Nations and other bodies. A selective approach would be necessary; in addition, as he had stated, he intended to proceed by establishing a process of meetings and consultations, in order to ensure an exchange of views and dialogue to the greatest extent possible.

Mr. PAPADATOS (Greece) said that, having noted the concern expressed by the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund about the number of reports required, he would appreciate any comments on overlapping in the work of the functional commissions, particularly with regard to the implementation of conference decisions.

Mrs. SADIK (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund) said that her concern was illustrated by the fact that UNFPA had to prepare reports for its own Executive Board - which met four times a year - and for the Council, the Commission on Population and Development, the Second Committee and, perhaps, also the Third Committee of the General Assembly, as well as for ACC and the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) - a burdensome amount of reporting. There could also be a considerable degree of overlapping. For example, a number of issues, such as health, education and the empowerment of women, were dealt with in several commissions. Such overlapping of mandates called for a degree of rationalization, perhaps including the appointment of lead agencies for particular topics.

In that regard, the Council should be viewed not as a decision-making body but as a policy-directing one; all the issues before it had been drawn up by other bodies. Overall policy direction to all parts of the United Nations system was, indeed, an important part of the Council's role. For example, UNFPA lacked any real facilities for dialogue with Governments in family planning and other matters; it was also hampered in its dealings with the Second and Third Committees because of confusion in the topics - e.g. youth groups, the disabled and drug problems - covered by their respective mandates. Moreover, the way in which the various commissions were serviced by the Secretariat was not coordinated. The Council could play an effective role by looking into such matters, as well as in monitoring the system-wide implementation of conference decisions.

The Council's high-level segment might, perhaps, select topics for discussion a year or two in advance, so that the various functional commissions could provide suitable inputs in good time, thus helping to coordinate the work of the Council and the commissions. In addition, discussions should be more pragmatic, focusing inter alia on the many useful features, in various parts of the system, that had hitherto been neglected. The aim should be to improve the convergence and rationalization of resources, and enhance the world's perception of the Organization as a whole.

Mr. SPETH (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme) said he agreed that there was a need to rationalize reporting, particularly with regard to intergovernmental processes, since Governments might well find that the burden resulting from the numerous conferences, treaties and other instruments was becoming insupportable. He hoped that the Council could take a leading role in moves towards such rationalization.

Mr. HOLTHE (Norway) said that his delegation welcomed the initiative taken by the Administrator of UNDP with regard to inter-agency coordination, and was seeking to ensure that similar steps were taken at the intergovernmental level. He wondered, however, how the two approaches could best be coordinated; in that regard, he did not think that the ACC/CPC system, as it currently existed, was sufficient. The Commission on Sustainable Development might well become a sort of mini-Council, in addition to what appeared to be its specialization in environmental questions. He would

appreciate the Under-Secretary-General's comments on those points. Lastly, he wondered how the Secretariat and agency approaches could be organized so as to serve all the functional commissions most effectively.

Mr. SPETH (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme) said that there was no simple answer to the previous speaker's last question. Perhaps one approach could be that if there were, for example, five major clusters of issues to follow up, the Council could conduct a dialogue on one or two themes at each session; perhaps, too, some form of continuous steering committee would be useful. A rationalization scheme was indeed essential. He had no immediate proposal to make; but perhaps the Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, the President and he himself could together produce some suggestions.

Mr. DESAI (Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) said that, because of their nature, the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Commission on Population and Development, dealt with matters which already entailed some degree of coordination. However, the fact that they were functional commissions of the Council surely ruled out any question of competition. Nevertheless, better links were required between the Council's priorities and the functional commission work.

The main focus of the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development was indeed on the environment and most of the ministers attending its meetings held environment portfolios. He saw no cause for concern in that. After all, the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) showed how an initial concern for the environment had led to a focus on sustainable development; the latter, not just conservation, was the main theme of the Commission's work.

With regard to the Norwegian representative's last question, his department had a certain general responsibility for coordinating support to intergovernmental processes and the work of the Council and its functional commissions. It was not possible, however, for one department to have the substantive capacity to support all the various processes; the result would be an immense amount of duplication. He could see nothing wrong with dispersal; the important point was to ensure that capacity was available wherever needed and that there was an efficient system of information about all processes and decisions.

Mr. HENZE (Germany) said that he was not entirely satisfied by the reply of the Executive Director of the UNFPA to the questions asked by the representative of Greece. It was for the Council to give policy guidelines to its subsidiary bodies and to start the process of reform. He wondered whether ACC could present to the Council a more problem-oriented report, possibly including recommended rationalization measures.

The PRESIDENT said that, since the matter raised by the representative of Germany was a crucial one, he would not ask the panel to reply immediately. In his own view, part of the problem was that some shortcomings still remained in the Council's own structure.

Mr. CALOVSKY (Observer for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that constant coordination might become counter-productive in respect of the efficiency of the United Nations system. The time had surely come to consider the decentralization and deregulation of the work of the Organization. More could be achieved if programmes, regional commissions and specialized agencies were allowed a greater degree of independence.

Mr. DESAI (Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) said that one of the matters his Department was focusing upon was decentralization, in particular from Headquarters to the regions.

Mrs. SADIK (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund) said that UNFPA was seeking to achieve both decentralization and deregulation. However, she believed that, for proper and effective operation of a decentralized and deregulated system, it was essential to have an effective monitoring and evaluation mechanism. The role of the Council was extremely critical, in that regard, since it must provide the necessary framework and policy direction and monitor the implementation of projects by all the bodies in a decentralized system.

Mr. FLORENCIO (Brazil), referring to the need to strengthen the United Nations analytical capacity by utilizing the technical resources available in UNCTAD and the regional commissions, said he would welcome further elaboration on that point. It was essential to upgrade the United Nations role in the economic and social fields so that it could carry on a more effective dialogue with the Bretton Woods institutions. He wondered how the various experts in the relevant United Nations bodies could properly support the Council in such a role.

Noting that follow-up to United Nations conferences occurred at the national level also, he said he wished to know how the United Nations was currently supporting the Governments in that role and how it could become more helpful in that respect.

Mr. FORTIN (Officer-in-Charge, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) said that the United Nations had an enormous political and research capability that was not being fully utilized. There was a need for coordination so as to maximize the impact of the United Nations analytical work. In that connection, he said that a start had been made in the case of the regional commissions.

Mrs. SADIK (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund) said, with regard to the analytical capacity of the United Nations, that UNFPA had been concerned with the task of how best to utilize the system's research capacity. It was currently making use of the technical support services at Headquarters. In that connection, it should not be forgotten that one of the main tasks of Headquarters was to assist the regional advisers. However, it should be noted that Headquarters also examined other studies carried out in the Organization and provided information to the country programme at the operational level.

In addition to providing guidelines on how to develop educational curricula, the UNFPA also drew attention to the experience of various countries and regions and it should be noted that, in many countries, population had been selected by the respective Government as one of the priority themes.

Mr. SPETH (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme) said that the United Nations had an analytical and policy analysis capability that was as strong as that of the Bretton Woods institutions. The initiative of working with the regional commissions was a major step towards improving that capacity. The academic community around the world was willing to cooperate with the United Nations but encouragement by Governments would be necessary, together with genuine leadership inside the system.

Mr. MILLERON (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis) said that, as things stood, every possible attempt should be made to focus on the successes that were being achieved everywhere in the field of coordination. Questions related to information were thus becoming increasingly important and, in connection with the

operation of information systems in the widest sense of the term, it was necessary to take a good look at the new means of providing information that were becoming available.

The Secretary-General considered it very important that all possible efforts should be made to ensure that the political, economic and social fields worked more effectively together within the Secretariat. The fact was that there were fields in which coordination was working properly and harmoniously. It must be made clear to Governments that that was so and that advantage could be taken of the fact.

Mr. BARNETT (United Kingdom) said he wished to know who was evaluating the effectiveness of the inter-agency coordination mechanisms. He would also like to know whether or not the country strategy note, where it existed, would have an important role to play in the coordination of the field-level implementation of conference follow-up.

Mr. DESAI (Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) said, in reply to the first question put by the representative of the United Kingdom, that ACC itself had carried out a fairly extensive review of the earlier inter-agency coordination set-up. Basically, ACC currently had three subsidiary bodies and was undertaking a review of its functions. In that sense, therefore, an effort was being made to carry out a self-examination of the value of the coordination machinery, as perceived by the people being coordinated, and to build it into the process. However, coordination was only a first stage; it must lead to a saving of resources.

With regard to the second question by the representative of the United Kingdom, the country strategy note was a device used by the country concerned and not part of the United Nations machinery. Its primary purpose was to indicate a country's development priorities.

In reply to a question by Mr. BAILLARGEON (Canada), Mr. AYALA LASSO (High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that the Secretary-General had emphasized the need for human rights aspects to be included in all the general activities of the United Nations, and he himself had constantly reiterated that need. The importance of human rights was being increasingly recognized throughout the world and the Vienna Conference had clearly demonstrated the legitimate desire of the community of nations to deal with human rights matters.

If consideration was given to the content of economic, social and cultural rights, it would be seen that all United Nations organs were concerned with the promotion of human rights and that there was an urgent need for coordination with the other agencies of the United Nations system. The philosophy underlying action to promote human rights should imbue all the programmes of the various organizations of the United Nations system.

Mr. DESAI (Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) said that the machinery for the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development had yet to be established. The point he had been making previously was that, when such a machinery was being set up, whether at the inter-agency level or the intergovernmental level, it should take full account of all that had previously been decided. The example he had given was that some of the follow-up dimensions of the International Conference on Population and Development would clearly be of relevance and importance also for the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development.

Mrs. SADIK (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund) said that some of the goals of the Cairo Conference had also been referred to at the World Summit for Social Development. In the case of the Fourth World Conference on Women, the task force would feed in what had already been accomplished. The Education task force would use materials that were to be produced by the Working Group on Basic Education. In that way, an attempt was being made to reduce duplication and to make use of the materials accumulated and work already done in the various places and parts of the system.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.